

# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force Report



**BETH CHAPMAN**  
*SECRETARY OF STATE*

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**BETH CHAPMAN**  
***SECRETARY OF STATE***

Dear Governor Riley and Members of the Alabama Legislature:

It has been a great privilege to serve as chairman of the Military and Overseas Voting Task Force for the past year. The task force is a diverse and inclusive group of election officials, members of the Legislature, National Guard, Constitutional Officers, policy advisors and/or their representatives. Circuit Clerks, Sheriffs, Probate Judges, Registrars, veterans, municipalities, counties, active military members, and citizens at large were all represented through various specified appointments.

The task force was provided first-hand information from representatives of the Overseas Vote Foundation, the Federal Voting Assistance Program, the Departments of Justice and Defense, a General from the Joint Chiefs of Staff Office, and a Florida elections official who conducted a successful international, first-of-its-kind military voting pilot in the most recent Presidential Election.

The presenters we hosted were leaders in their respective fields regarding the issue of military and overseas (UOCAVA) voting. Alabama is the only state to conduct such meetings and our inaugural event included both national and international experts in this field.

Together, we have accomplished great things. The work of the bipartisan task force has epitomized the spirit of team work and productivity. Alabama is the only state in the nation to request White Papers and to host a forum attended by the only three companies in the world that have successfully conducted secure internet voting in other countries.

Moreover, Alabama continues to lead the nation in efforts to assist military and overseas voters. I was honored to be selected by my peers in the National Association of Secretaries of State to testify on this issue before Congress and to attend an International Summit in Munich, Germany regarding this issue. The PEW Charitable Trust considers the work Alabama has conducted to be the premier effort in the nation. They have invited me to several conferences to share the work and research we have conducted in Alabama. This has been done at their expense, not ours.

In addition, by virtue of being the state's Chief Elections Official, I serve on the United States Election Assistance Commission Standards Board and also serve as Co-Chairman of NASS' International Relations Board which has allowed me additional avenues to communicate with military voters. All information gathered through my service on these boards has been provided to the task force members for their consideration.

I am enclosing information reporting the work of the task force and a copy of the proposed legislation which was adopted unanimously by the voting members of the task force to go forward in this Legislative Session. All members of the task force who worked diligently in this effort are unified and they have seen first-hand demonstrations of the 21st Century technology that is available to help us provide the secure electronic means necessary to ensure that our military members' votes are cast and counted.

Our objective has been completed and the work has been done. It is now time to move forward so that Alabama can proudly provide a more fair, secure, and guaranteed way to vote for our military and overseas voters. Our military members, whose lives are in harm's way to protect our right to vote, must be able to cast their votes as easily as or more so than we do. Please join me and members of the task force in calling upon the Legislature to help make this happen, as I know you will.

By the end of this year the Alabama National Guard alone will deploy more than 2,000 soldiers to Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan. While they and other military voters are serving overseas, Alabama will conduct the 2010 primary, run-off, and general elections. It is therefore of the utmost importance that this legislation be presented and passed immediately.

If you have any questions regarding the legislation or report, please contact me. It would be my great honor to meet with you and answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Beth Chapman  
Secretary of State



# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

## Executive Order 40

*WHEREAS, Alabama is estimated to have over 56,000 overseas citizens that claim Alabama as their residence, and Alabama has over 19,000 uniformed service members, many of them being currently deployed or soon to be deployed, to overseas locations, and Alabama has 11,300 Army National Guard members and 2,200 Air Guard members, almost 1,000 of them being currently deployed overseas and with approximately 1,600 of them being scheduled for overseas deployment during the upcoming year. All of these Alabama citizens are in need of and should be given the ability to effectively and efficiently cast their vote in Alabama elections; and*

*WHEREAS, the State of Alabama is heavily indebted to all of these military service personnel for their service and sacrifice on behalf of Alabama and the United States, and Alabama should provide them the opportunity to fully and effectively participate in our electoral system which is the bedrock of our democracy; and*

*WHEREAS, last year Alabama's Secretary of State created a bipartisan coalition, which included the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, State Quartermaster/Adjutant of the State Department of Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Adjutant General of the Alabama National Guard, and numerous legislators of both political parties, designed to support legislation which was intended to allow members of the military and their families and all Alabamians located overseas to vote via the internet, under means of tight security; and*

*WHEREAS, Alabama still has the unique opportunity to become a flagship state with regard to military and overseas internet voting, and it is believed that a formal Alabama Military and Overseas Voting Task Force could accomplish much in designing a system and securing the passage of necessary legislation to accomplish these goals.*

*NOW THEREFORE, based upon these considerations, and for other good and valid reasons which relate thereto, I Bob Riley, as Governor of the State of Alabama, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of Alabama do hereby establish the Alabama Military and Overseas Voting Task Force (hereinafter referred to as the "Task Force") which Task Force will naturally fit within the duties and responsibilities of the Office of Secretary of State, since the Alabama Secretary of State statutorily serves as the Chief Elections Official of the State of Alabama. Said Task Force will be chaired by the Secretary of State of the State of Alabama and function pursuant to the following provisions.*

*BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the purpose of the Task Force is to engage in discussion and to explore and develop a plan of action for the implementation of a secure system for internet voting for military and overseas citizens of the State of Alabama. The plan should be designed to make it as accessible, convenient, and as secure as possible, for overseas Alabama citizens to cast their vote in all Alabama elections.*

*BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the Task Force is created and shall operate as an independent council. The Task Force shall have the duties, responsibilities, functions, and authority set forth in this order and otherwise provided by law. The Task Force shall be chaired by the Alabama Secretary of State, and shall include the following ex-officio members, or their officially-named designee:*

- 1. The Governor of Alabama;*
- 2. The Alabama Lieutenant Governor;*
- 3. The Speaker of the Alabama House of Representatives;*
- 4. The Alabama Attorney General;*
- 5. The Adjutant General of the Alabama National Guard;*



# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

## Executive Order 40

6. *President of the Alabama Circuit Clerks Association;*
7. *President of the Alabama Probate Judges Association;*
8. *President of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama;*
9. *President of the Alabama Sheriffs Association;*
10. *President of the Alabama League of Municipalities;*
11. *Chairperson of the Alabama Registrars Association;*
12. *Chairperson of the Alabama Voter Registration Advisory Board;*
13. *Chairperson of the Alabama Electronic Voting Committee;*
14. *Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs;*
15. *Alabama's Chief Information Officer of the Finance Information Services Division;*
16. *Chairperson of the Governor's HAVA Implementation Committee, until such time as that Committee no longer exists; and*
17. *The Alabama HAVA Director.*

*BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the Task Force shall meet at least quarterly at the call of the Chair. All council members shall serve without compensation, except the Legislative members, who shall be compensated by the Legislature, according to Legislative rules and governing such service.*

*BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that no person or individual shall continue to serve, as a member on the Task Force, when he or she no longer officially represents the function or serves in the capacity enumerated in this Executive Order, but shall be replaced by his or her successor in the respective office.*

*BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the Task Force shall report one year from the date of establishment to the Governor and the Alabama Legislature on the progress made toward accomplishing their missions.*

*BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the Governor may elect to appoint additional members at a later date if deemed necessary.*

*BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that this Executive Order is effective immediately and shall remain in effect until amended or modified by the Governor or until terminated by operation of law.*

*DONE AND ORDERED this 27th day of February, 2008.*

*Bob Riley*  
*Governor*



# **Military & Overseas Voting Task Force**

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## **Membership List**

**The Honorable Beth Chapman, Chair**  
**Secretary of State**

**The Honorable Adonis Bailey**  
**President, Alabama Registrar Association**

**Mr. Bryan Taylor**  
**Designee of the Governor**

**Mr. Mike Gomez**  
**Chairman, Voter Registration Advisory Board**

**The Honorable Myron Penn**  
**Designee of the Lt. Governor**

**The Honorable Mike Davis**  
**Chairman, Electronic Voting Committee**

**The Honorable Jimmy Martin**  
**Designee of the Speaker of the House**

**Rear Admiral W. Clyde Marsh**  
**Commissioner, Department of Veterans Affairs**

**Mr. Jack Wallace**  
**Designee of the Attorney General**

**The Honorable Bill English**  
**Chairman, HAVA Implementation Committee**

**Major General A.C. Blalock**  
**The Adjutant General**

**Mr. Jim Burns**  
**State of Alabama**  
**Chief Information Officer**

**The Honorable Steven Grimes**  
**President, Circuit Clerks Association**

**Mr. Adam Thompson**  
**Help America Vote Act Director**

**The Honorable Tommy Crosslin**  
**Designee of the Probate Judges Association**

**The Honorable Jerold Dean**  
**President, Association of County Commissions**

**The Honorable Mike Hale**  
**President, Sheriffs Association**

**The Honorable Charles Penhale**  
**President, League of Municipalities**



# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

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## First Meeting - March 12, 2008

The Military & Overseas Voting Task Force held its first meeting on March 12, 2008. The meeting coincided with the Inaugural Military & Overseas Voting Forum held at the Renaissance Montgomery Hotel. All members of the Legislature, election officials and the public at large were invited to attend the forum. Special guest speakers included:

- Major General Michael H. Sumrall  
Assistant to the Chairman for National Guard Matters  
The Joint Chiefs of Staff
- Mrs. Susan Dzieduszycka-Suinat  
President & CEO  
Overseas Vote Foundation
- Mr. J. Scott Wiedmann  
Deputy Director, Federal Voting Assistance Program  
U.S. Department of Defense
- Ms. Rebecca J. Wertz, Esq.  
Deputy Chief, Voting Rights Section  
Civil Rights Division  
U.S. Department of Justice
- The Honorable Caroline C. Hunter  
Vice Chair  
U.S. Election Assistance Commission

### **Members in Attendance**

Hon. Beth Chapman  
Bryan Taylor  
Hon. Myron Penn  
Hon. Jimmy Martin  
Jack Wallace  
Major General A.C. Blalock  
Hon. Mary Moore  
Hon. Tommy Crosslin  
Hon. Jerold Dean  
Hon. Mike Hale  
Hon. Charles Penhale

Hon. Adonis Bailey  
Mike Gomez  
Hon. Mike Davis  
Rear Admiral Clyde Marsh  
Jim Burns  
Hon. Bill English  
Adam Thompson

### **Members Absent**

None





# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

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## Second Meeting - April 17, 2008

The Military & Overseas Voting Task Force held its second meeting on April 17, 2008. The meeting was held in the Lt. Governor's Conference Room in the State Capitol. This meeting focused on reviewing the responses to the Requests for Information issued by the Secretary of State's Office to over 4,000 vendors regarding internet voting. The Task Force reviewed the responses and voted to invite the only three companies (with experience in internet voting) to give a presentation before the Task Force on June 19, 2008.

The Task Force also discussed pending federal legislation designed to allow military members to return their ballots via overnight carriers (UPS, FedEx, etc.). The Task Force also discussed an Alabama bill to allow military members to fax their voted ballots back to the Absentee Election Manager in each county. Secretary Chapman discussed her recent trip to Washington to testify before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on House Administration regarding military and overseas voting.

### **Members in Attendance**

Hon. Beth Chapman  
Bryan Taylor  
Jack Wallace  
Major General A.C. Blalock  
Hon. Mary Moore  
Hon. Mike Hale  
Hon. Charles Penhale  
Hon. Adonis Bailey  
Mike Gomez  
Rear Admiral Clyde Marsh  
Jim Burns  
Hon. Bill English  
Adam Thompson

### **Members Absent**

Hon. Jimmy Martin  
Hon. Myron Penn  
Hon. Tommy Crosslin  
Hon. Mike Davis  
Hon. Jerold Dean



# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

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## Third Meeting - June 19, 2008

The Military & Overseas Voting Task Force held its third meeting on June 19, 2008. The meeting was held in the auditorium of the State Capitol. The purpose of the meeting was to hear from the three invited vendors who have experience in implementing internet voting around the world. Alabama is the only state in the country to host all three of these vendors and to view their demonstrations. All members of the Legislature, election officials and the public at large were invited to attend the meeting. The vendors were:

- Election Systems & Software, Inc.
- Everyone Counts, Inc.
- Scytl: Secure Electronic Voting

### **Members in Attendance**

Hon. Beth Chapman  
Bryan Taylor  
Jack Wallace  
Major General A.C. Blalock  
Hon. Mary Moore  
Hon. Mike Hale  
Hon. Charles Penhale  
Hon. Adonis Bailey  
Mike Gomez  
Rear Admiral Clyde Marsh  
Jim Burns  
Hon. Bill English  
Adam Thompson

### **Members Absent**

Hon. Jimmy Martin  
Hon. Myron Penn  
Hon. Tommy Crosslin  
Hon. Mike Davis  
Hon. Jerold Dean





# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

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## Fourth Meeting - December 15, 2008

The Military & Overseas Voting Task Force held its fourth meeting on December 15, 2008. The meeting was held in the Old Archives Room of the State Capitol. The purpose of the meeting was to hear from Pat Hollarn; Supervisor of Elections for Okaloosa County, Florida; regarding her successful military internet voting pilot program during the November 2008 General Election. Mrs. Hollarn conducted remote voting in three locations overseas for military members from Okaloosa County. It is the only pilot of its kind ever conducted in U.S. history.

### **Members in Attendance**

Hon. Beth Chapman  
Bryan Taylor  
Hon. Jimmy Martin  
Major General A.C. Blalock  
Hon. Steven Grimes  
Hon. Mike Hale  
Hon. Adonis Bailey  
Rear Admiral Clyde Marsh  
Jim Burns  
Adam Thompson

### **Members Absent**

Hon. Myron Penn  
Hon. Tommy Crosslin  
Hon. Mike Davis  
Hon. Jerold Dean  
Mike Gomez  
Jack Wallace  
Hon. Charles Penhale



# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

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## Fifth Meeting - January 29, 2009

The Military & Overseas Voting Task Force held its fifth and final meeting on January 29, 2008. The meeting was held in the Lt. Governor's Conference Room in the State Capitol. The purpose of the meeting was to review proposed legislation based on Okaloosa County's statute regarding internet voting. The Task Force members reviewed and made additions and corrections to the legislation and unanimously recommended it be introduced this legislative session.

### **Members in Attendance**

Hon. Beth Chapman  
Bryan Taylor  
Hon. Jimmy Martin  
Jack Wallace  
Mike Gomez  
Major General A.C. Blalock  
Hon. Steven Grimes  
Hon. Mike Hale  
Hon. Adonis Bailey  
Rear Admiral Clyde Marsh  
Jim Burns  
Adam Thompson

### **Members Absent**

Hon. Myron Penn  
Hon. Tommy Crosslin  
Hon. Mike Davis  
Hon. Jerold Dean  
Hon. Charles Penhale



# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

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## Proposed Legislation

A BILL  
TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

Relating to elections and the provision of secure overseas absentee voting by electronic transmission; to establish the Alabama Electronic Overseas Voting Advisory Committee to advise whether a secure electronic means may be established for use by the Secretary of State to conduct overseas absentee voting; to provide for the duties of the absentee election manager in transmitting and receiving ballots electronically; to provide for an overseas voter certificate; and to provide for the adoption of rules by the Secretary of State to implement this act and ensure the secure electronic transmission of ballots.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. For the purposes of this act, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

(1) COMMITTEE. The Alabama Electronic Overseas Voting Advisory Committee.

(2) OVERSEAS VOTER. Includes all of the following:

a. A member of the uniformed services while in the active service, or an eligible spouse or dependent of such a member, who is a permanent resident of the state and is temporarily residing outside of the territorial limits of the United States and the District of Columbia, who is qualified and registered to vote as provided by law.

b. A member of the Merchant Marine of the United States, or an eligible spouse or dependent of such a member, who is a permanent resident of the state and is temporarily residing outside of the territorial limits of the United States and the District of Columbia, who is qualified and registered to vote as provided by law.

c. Any other citizen of the United States who is a permanent resident of the state and is temporarily residing outside of the territorial limits of the United States and the District of Columbia, who is qualified and registered to vote as provided by law.

Section 2. (a) The Alabama Electronic Overseas Voting Advisory Committee is created to advise whether secure electronic means may be established for conducting absentee voting for overseas voters and to advise and assist the office of the Secretary of State in the establishment, testing, and implemen-



# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

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## Proposed Legislation

tation of absentee overseas balloting by secure electronic means.

(b) The membership of the committee shall include the Secretary of State as chair, a representative of the Alabama Sheriff's Association appointed by that association, a representative of the Alabama Probate Judge's Association appointed by that association, a representative of the Alabama Circuit Clerks Association appointed by that association, a representative of the Alabama National Guard appointed by the Adjutant General, Chair of the Senate Constitution, Campaign Finance, Ethics, and Elections Committee, Chair of the House Constitution and Elections Committee, and a representative of the county boards of registrars appointed by the Secretary of State. The membership of the committee shall be inclusive and reflect the racial, gender, geographic, urban/rural, and economic diversity of this state. Members of the committee shall be appointed within 30 days after the effective date of this act and shall serve without compensation but shall be eligible for reimbursement for necessary and reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties.

(c) The chair of the committee shall convene an organizational meeting of the committee within 45 days after the effective date of this act.

Section 3. (a) If the Secretary of State determines a secure electronic means may be established for conducting overseas absentee voting, the Secretary of State shall promulgate rules to provide that option to eligible overseas voters. The rules for conducting overseas absentee voting by secure remote electronic transmission shall authorize the absentee election manager to accept requests for absentee ballots and voted absentee ballots from overseas voters and shall provide a process for verifying the identity of a voter, ensuring the security of the transmission, accepting a voted ballot, and recording each ballot received.

(b) Before overseas absentee voting may be conducted pursuant to this act, all of the following requirements shall be satisfied:

(1) The Secretary of State, by rule adopted pursuant to the Alabama Administrative Procedure Act, shall provide all of the following:

a. A timetable and process for notifying eligible overseas voters of the availability of voting an absentee ballot by secure remote electronic transmission.

b. Detailed instructions to be given eligible overseas voters regarding voting by secure remote electronic transmission.

c. A timetable for the conduct of elections utilizing the electronic trans-



# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

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## Proposed Legislation

mission of absentee ballots.

d. A method of providing blank ballots to overseas voters.

e. A method and criteria for returning overseas voted absentee ballots to the absentee election manager.

f. Procedures for ensuring the physical security of the remote voting site for receipt and transmission of blank and voted absentee ballots.

(2) The Secretary of State, by rule adopted pursuant to the Alabama Administrative Procedure Act, shall establish minimum criteria to ensure the secure remote electronic transmission of election materials including, but not limited to:

a. The use of encrypted information, including, but not limited to, ballots, passwords, and both public and private encryption keys.

1. A public or private key encryption methodology shall include key generation under the control of the Secretary of State.

2. A password protected private key shall be held secure by the county canvassing board and never transmitted or otherwise divulged by any means.

3. A password protected private key that is unique for each eligible overseas voter to digitally sign the ballot for transmission and storage before decryption by the canvassing board.

b. The capability for auditing the secure remote voting application source code, and the capability for this application to be executed on a clean computer which, at a minimum, has a baseline operating system on its hard disk and no other software or driver installed.

c. The capability to secure access to and from the overseas voter and the voting server or the voting database platform, or both.

d. The verification of the authenticity of the identity of the overseas voter before granting access to the transmission of election material.

e. The capability for the overseas voter to determine that the secure transmission of election material was successful.

f. The capability for the absentee election manager to segregate rejected ballots before decryption.



# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

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## Proposed Legislation

g. The capability to record election material received by secure transmission.

h. The capability for the absentee election manager to produce a marked paper ballot for each vote cast by secure transmission.

Section 4. (a) A request for an overseas absentee ballot shall include all of the following information:

(1) The name of the voter requesting the ballot.

(2) The legal Alabama residence of the voter.

(3) The date of birth of the voter.

(4) One of the following:

a. An APO/FPO or other deliverable overseas address, if the overseas voter requests that the ballot be mailed or sent by commercial ground or air carrier.

b. A facsimile machine number where return information shall be received, if the overseas voter requests that the ballot be faxed. If the voter requests facsimile transmission, his or her signature is also required.

c. An electronic mail address, if the overseas voter requests that the ballot be transmitted pursuant to electronic mail.

d. A signed application for an electronic ballot if the overseas voter requests that the ballot be transmitted or accessed by other secure electronic means approved by rule of the Secretary of State.

(b) A request for a ballot to be faxed to an overseas voter shall remain valid for 12 months, unless a shorter length of time is requested by the overseas voter.

(c) The absentee election manager and the staff of the absentee election manager shall ensure the confidentiality of all voted ballots, including voted ballots received by facsimile.

Section 5. (a) Upon receipt of a request for an overseas absentee ballot, the absentee election manager shall verify the information provided and, upon determining that the overseas voter is qualified and registered to vote in the election, provide the voter with all of the following pursuant to the means



# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

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## Proposed Legislation

requested by the voter in Section 4:

- (1) An absentee ballot.
- (2) Instructions for voting.
- (3) Instructions for returning the voted ballot.
- (4) An overseas voter certificate.

(b) For each request for an overseas absentee ballot, the absentee election manager shall record the date of the request, the means by which the ballot was sent to the overseas voter, and the date the absentee ballot was transmitted to the overseas voter.

(c) The absentee election manager shall ensure that all transmitting and receiving equipment is located in a secure location, with access limited to employees of the absentee election manager. The absentee election manager shall also ensure accuracy in transmitting overseas absentee ballots to addresses and numbers provided by overseas voters.

(d) The overseas voter shall ensure the security of his or her transmitting and receiving equipment.

Section 6. (a) An overseas voter may return a voted ballot by facsimile, mail, commercial ground or air carrier, or by other secure remote electronic access in accordance with Section 9. Voted ballots returned by standard electronic mail shall be rejected.

(b) An overseas voter who returns a voted absentee ballot by facsimile shall send the ballot and his or her overseas voter certificate directly to the facsimile number provided by the absentee election manager or a number provided by the Federal Voting Assistance Program of the Department of Defense. To be counted, an overseas absentee ballot shall be received by the absentee election manager no later than 12:00 noon on election day.

(c) An overseas voter who returns by mail a voted ballot initially received by him or her pursuant to electronic mail or facsimile, shall seal the ballot in an unmarked envelope, or security envelope, and place both the sealed security envelope and his or her overseas voter certificate in a separate ballot transmittal envelope for mailing. The ballot transmittal envelope should be marked "Absentee Ballot Enclosed."

(d) An overseas voter who submits a voted absentee ballot by secure remote





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electronic transmission shall send an electronic version of his or her overseas voter certificate directly to the absentee election manager. A paper version of the overseas voter certificate may be placed in a separate ballot transmittal envelope for mailing. To be counted, an overseas absentee ballot submitted electronically shall be received by the absentee election manager no later than 12:00 noon on election day.

Section 7. An overseas voter certificate shall substantially conform to the following format:

### "OVERSEAS VOTER CERTIFICATE

"I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name), swear or affirm, under penalty of perjury, that:

"1. I am a member of the uniformed services or Merchant Marine on active duty temporarily residing outside the United States; or the eligible spouse or dependent of such a member temporarily residing outside the United States; or a United States citizen temporarily residing outside the United States; and

"2. I am a United States citizen, at least 18 years of age, as of the date of the applicable election, and eligible to vote in the requested jurisdiction; and

"3. I have not been convicted of a disqualifying felony or been adjudicated mentally incompetent or, if I have, my voting rights have been reinstated; and

"4. I am not registering, requesting a ballot, or voting in any other jurisdiction in the United States, except the jurisdiction cited in this voting form.

"In voting, I have marked and sealed my ballot in private and have not allowed any person to observe my marking of the ballot, except for those authorized to assist overseas voters under state or federal law. I have not been influenced in marking my ballot. My signature and date below indicate when I completed this certificate. The information on this form is true, accurate, and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that a material misstatement of fact in completion of this document may constitute grounds for a conviction for perjury.

"Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_"

Section 8. When an absentee ballot is sent to an overseas voter, it shall



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## Proposed Legislation

include all of the following instructions:

"(1) To ensure that your absentee ballot is counted, it should be completed and returned to the absentee election manager of the county of registration as soon as possible, and not later than 12:00 noon on the day of the election.

"(2) The ballot should be marked in secret.

"(3) Only the number of candidates or issue choices indicated on the ballot should be marked. If the ballot instructs a voter to "vote for one" candidate, and you vote for more than one candidate, your vote in that race will not be counted.

"(4) For your ballot to be counted, you must also complete an overseas voter certificate, which includes your signature. Failure to include your signature will result in your ballot not being counted.

"(5) An overseas voted absentee ballot may be returned to the absentee election manager by facsimile, mail, commercial ground or air carrier, or secure remote electronic access, if such option is approved by the Secretary of State. An overseas voted absentee ballot returned by standard electronic mail shall be rejected.

"(6) If faxed, the voted absentee ballot and overseas voter certificate shall be faxed to the number provided by the absentee election manager or to a facsimile number provided by the Federal Voting Assistance Program of the Department of Defense. If the ballot and certificate are faxed to the number provided by the Federal Voting Assistance Program, the voter should ensure that there is sufficient time for the Federal Voting Assistance Program to transmit the ballot and certificate to the absentee election manager so that it is received no later than 12:00 noon on election day. By faxing a voted ballot, the voter voluntarily waives his or her right to a secret ballot.

"(7) If mailed, the voted absentee ballot and overseas voter certificate shall be mailed to the absentee election manager as follows:

"a. Place the voted ballot in a sealed secrecy envelope, which may have been provided in the original mailing of the ballot by the absentee election manager. Anyone who has received his or her unmarked ballot by facsimile or electronic mail may place his or her voted ballot in an unmarked envelope and seal the envelope.

"b. Insert the secrecy envelope inside a separate mailing envelope. If the ballot was mailed to you, use the mailing envelope provided and fill out the



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overseas voter certificate on the back of the mailing envelope. If the ballot was faxed to you or sent by electronic mail, place the sealed secrecy envelope and the completed overseas voter certificate in another envelope for mailing. Do not seal the overseas voter certificate in the secrecy envelope with the ballot. The mailing envelope should be clearly marked "Absentee Ballot Enclosed."

"c. Mail the absentee ballot to the absentee election manager with sufficient postage.

"(8) To vote and transmit a voted absentee ballot and overseas voter certificate by secure remote electronic access, carefully follow the supplemental instructions given to you by the absentee election manager to ensure that your ballot will be counted.

"(9) It is a crime under Alabama law to accept any gift, payment, or gratuity in exchange for your vote for a candidate. It is also a crime under Alabama law to vote in an election using a false identity or false address, or under any other circumstances making your ballot false or fraudulent."

### Section 9. Processing returned absentee ballots.

(a) For each voted absentee ballot received from an eligible overseas voter, the absentee election manager shall record the date such ballot was received and the means by which the ballot was returned.

(b) If any absentee overseas voter mails the voted ballot to the absentee election manager in an envelope other than an absentee ballot mailing envelope provided by the absentee election manager, the absentee election manager shall open the mailing envelope to determine if an overseas voter certificate is enclosed. If an overseas voter certificate is not enclosed, the secrecy envelope containing the ballot shall not be opened and the envelope shall be marked "Rejected: No Certificate." If the overseas voter certificate is enclosed, the absentee election manager shall verify the eligibility of the overseas voter and shall process the ballot.

(c) Upon receipt by facsimile of a voted absentee ballot, the absentee election manager shall enclose the ballot in a sealed envelope to preserve secrecy and attach the overseas voter certificate to the sealed envelope. Upon a determination by the absentee election official that the overseas voter ballot is eligible to be counted, the ballot shall be removed from the envelope and duplicated for processing through tabulating equipment.

(d) Upon receipt by mail of a voted absentee ballot that was originally sent



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via electronic mail or facsimile, the overseas voter certificate shall be reviewed and, upon a determination by the absentee election official that the overseas voter ballot is eligible to be counted, the ballot shall be removed from the envelope and duplicated for processing through tabulating equipment.

(e) Upon receipt of a voted absentee ballot transmitted by secure remote electronic access, the electronic version of the overseas voter certificate shall be reviewed. Upon a determination by the canvassing board that the overseas voter ballot is eligible, the ballot shall be selected for decryption and duplicated for processing through tabulating equipment.

Section 10. This act shall become effective immediately following its passage and approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.



# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

## Letter of Endorsement

### JOINT FORCES HEADQUARTERS

#### ALABAMA

OFFICE OF THE JFHQ-AL COMMANDER

P. O. BOX 3711

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36109-0711

January 29, 2009

To: Secretary of State Beth Chapman and the Alabama Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

Due to a pre-planned and scheduled readiness deployment meeting today, I have to miss the meeting to discuss the proposed legislation to facilitate overseas voting for military members in Alabama. Colonel Bryan Morgan will represent me in my absence.

I approve of the legislation that was sent out that allows for absentee balloting to be facilitated for deployed military members by:

APO/FPO or other deliverable overseas address

A facsimile machine

An electronic mail address

Other secure electronic means approved by the Secretary of State

I trust the members of the Committee and all voting officials to adopt the best alternative to recommend to the 2009 Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature a system to assist absentee voting for those Alabama National Guard members currently deployed and the several thousand members scheduled to be deploying in the near future.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Abner C. Blalock  
Major General, AL ARNG  
Adjutant General



# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

## Letter of Endorsement



REAR ADMIRAL W. CLYDE MARSH, USN, (RET.)  
COMMISSIONER

STATE OF ALABAMA  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
P.O. Box 1509  
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36102-1509  
TELEPHONE (334) 242-5077  
FAX (334) 242-5102



February 2, 2009

The Honorable Beth Chapman  
Secretary of State  
P. O. Box 5616  
Montgomery, Alabama 36103-5616

Dear Secretary Chapman:

I wanted to take this opportunity to write and convey my appreciation for having the opportunity to be a member of the Governor's Overseas Military Voting Task Force. The dedication and genuine concern displayed by members of the task force under your capable leadership was wonderful to see and a pleasure to participate in. The overseas electronic voting has been the focus of many, but coordinated by few for the sole purpose of addressing the problem faced by our military personnel that are deployed in combat or other arduous duty that prevents them from voting in their home state and counties in which they reside.

I have some first hand experience with the challenges of voting via our cumbersome absentee ballot system. I missed a few election cycles all together because the logistics was too hard in the face of national priority missions. Typically from warships at sea via fleet post offices mail can take anywhere from two weeks to months to reach its destination.

Our mail carrying infrastructure and foundation have not kept pace with the advances of computer and electronic technology. The mail is still relatively slow and cumbersome which restricts or reduces timely access for our active forces and other U. S. citizens residing overseas. When I was deployed out of county and missed a key election cycle, it was a significant distraction and disappointment because we were required to roll the dice with the absentee ballot system knowing that sometimes the ballots would make it and other times they would not.

The electronic voting program proposed in this bill will alleviate this burden and concern of military personnel by including them in one of the most important aspects of our democracy. This is long overdue and I am proud of the efforts of Alabamians stepping forward to take advantage of technology available to us and provide our active service man and women the tools they need to participate in the democracy they defend at home and abroad.

I strongly support this bill and truly believe that all of the active duty and retired military commanders would do the same. On behalf of the 420,000 Alabama Veterans, I salute you for leading the charge on this long overdue crucial initiative. This is a "must pass" bill because our military members and residents residing abroad deserve it.

Sincerely,



W. Clyde Marsh  
Commissioner

WCM/bi

cc: Governor Bob Riley





# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

## News Articles

# Task force sends <sup>1885</sup> military voting bill to House Voting

By Jenn Rowell  
jrowell@gannett.com

Alabama election officials, military members and veterans have put the final touches on what, if passed, will be sweeping legislation to make it easier for Alabama voters in the military to vote overseas.

The proposed legislation, based on a pilot program in Florida, would allow military members to request ballots by e-mail and fax, to return ballots by not just the U.S. mail but by commercial carriers and to vote at kiosks at overseas locations.

Alabama Secretary of State Beth Chapman and her task force on military and overseas voting reviewed the bill that had been drafted, tweaked a few minor points and then voted unanimously Thursday to have Rep. Jimmy Martin introduce the bill in Alabama's House of Representatives.

Since the task force's creation a year ago, the group has held five meetings and heard presentations on how to make it easier to vote online worldwide.

Martin, who has attended several of the task force meetings, was confident that the bill would be voted on.



"We will get a bill out of committee," he said. "Beyond that, I don't know."

The bill includes five methods to request ballots and four to return them.

Military and overseas voters can request ballots by mail, e-mail, fax, secure electronic transmission (kiosks) and commercial carriers. Ballots can be returned by mail, fax, secure electronic transmission, commercial carriers.

Chapman said the bill would not create any additional costs for cities or counties.

If the bill passes, it will be implemented statewide.

Adonis Bailey, Morgan County registrar, said officials need to stop dragging their feet and pass legislation to ease the voting process for overseas citizens.

From Page 1B

zens, especially military members.

"I cannot stand the thought that if they want to cast a ballot (they might) not be able to while they are serving our country," Bailey said.

Clyde Marsh, commissioner of the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs, said absentee voting was a hassle when he served in the Navy and was at sea or stationed away from home. He fully supports the bill, he said. As does Maj. Gen. A.C. Blalock, adjutant general of the Alabama National Guard.

He couldn't attend the meeting since he had deployment meetings, but Col. Brian Morgan attended in his place and said that passing this legislation now would be helpful to the Guard. The Guard is gearing up for two big deployment years and officials could include voting information in the pre-deployment briefings, Morgan said.

gan said.

If the bill passes, Chapman and her staff will start implementing the electronic voting program they've modeled after Florida's pilot program.

The Florida pilot program put secure voting kiosks in three overseas locations — England, Germany and Japan — during the general election.

Pat Hollarn, supervisor of elections for Okaloosa County in Florida, ran the program and spoke to the task force about it in December.

The kiosks in the pilot program used secure laptops and operated for a 10-day period. Since it was a pilot program, voting officials from Okaloosa County accompanied the kiosks to verify voters' identities and eligibility. Ballots were encrypted and transmitted to a secure server. The Okaloosa Canvassing Board validated, decrypted and tabulated the ballots.

Chapman wants to use the kiosks for the gubernatorial election in 2010.

"We need to get this through this session," Chapman said.

Voting Page 2B

Montgomery Advertiser

Jan. 30, 2009





# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

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## News Articles

### Military members overseas may get to vote online

1885  
By Jenn Rowell  
jrowell@gannett.com

Alabama's chief elections officer is on a mission.

Secretary of State Beth Chapman wants the state to establish online voting for military members and other residents overseas during local, state and national elections.

Toward that end, Gov. Bob

Riley this week announced the creation of a task force to explore the state's options.

Chapman said much of the fact-finding the task force will need already has been done. Her staff has sent out more than 4,000 requests for information to companies concerning what services they have and what they can create.

By this time next year, she

and the panel will give a report to Riley and the state Legislature.

"This is something that you can't just do overnight," she said.

The task force includes representatives from legal, law enforcement, government and military departments and will meet at least quarterly, Chapman said.

Online voting would streamline the absentee ballot process and do away with the need for several mailings. Currently, absentee ballots are requested by mail, the ballots are mailed back and then the completed ballots are mailed again.

"Time has been the biggest threat to their being able to vote in the past," Chapman said of military members. "The

time allowed in the law was just not sufficient."

She added that Alabama has one of the highest percentages of military members nationwide. More than 50,000 Alabamians are currently overseas, according to Riley's office.

"If we've got more men and women serving, then we should

Vote Page 7A

### Vote: Online test run of system expected in 2 years, Chapman says

From Page 2A

have faster and more efficient ways for them to vote overseas," Chapman said. "What we're planning for military overseas voting is a modern-day democracy."

Alabama is one of three states working with the Overseas Voting Foundation, a national project to simplify the voting process for Americans overseas.

Chapman said she expects to do a test run on an online voting system within the next two years. Her goal is to have an online voting system in place for the 2012 election cycle.

But it's all dependent on legislative approval.

"If we present the best product in the world and the Legislature doesn't pass a bill for us to use, it will be a moot point," she said.

Maj. Gen. A.C. Blalock is the adjutant general of the Alabama National Guard and a member of the task force. He said the voting process for troops is lengthy and it's often difficult to get absentee ballots to troops in remote locations.

"This is where we're at in the process to address a problem that has been going on since the initial deployments in 2002," Blalock said. "When our soldiers deploy and they want to exercise their right to vote, they have to do it by absentee ballot or return for voting day, which is not usually possible."

Maj. Chris Amos and Sgt. 1st Class Ben Ware have both voted absentee while deployed with the Guard. Both are as enthusiastic as Chapman about the prospect of online voting.

"I think you would be surprised at the tech savvy of soldiers in the military, and hav-

ing that opportunity online not only expedites the process but it takes less time out of their busy schedules," Amos said. "And at the same time it allows them to part in one of the most American things we do as citizens."

Ware said he remembered ballots getting lost in the mail, especially mail going to and from remote locations and he hears similar stories from his buddies currently deployed.

Clyde Marsh, commissioner of the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs, recalled similar problems from his duty days.

"We could only hope that those ballots reached their intended destination in time to be counted so that soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen could participate in this great democracy," Marsh said.

Montgomery Advertiser

Feb. 6, 2008



# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

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## News Articles

**Montgomery Advertiser**  
*March 13, 2008*

### **Military vote panel outlines timing issues**

By Jenn Rowell

Soldiers stationed in the remote Iraqi desert or sailors submerged on submarines have a tough time getting mail, let alone meeting the strict deadlines for absentee voting.

That was one of the concerns addressed at the first forum on military and overseas voting held Wednesday in Montgomery.

The military vote is especially important this year, since the outcome likely will have an affect on efforts to bring troops home, said Maj. Gen. Michael Sumrall, assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for National Guard members. He's also a former head of the Alabama National Guard.

"If you were in Iraq, wouldn't you like to have a say in whether you stay or go," he said.

Wednesday's forum is among efforts the state is making to explore alternative voting methods for deployed troops and citizens overseas, as well as troops stationed in the U.S., but away from home.

Earlier this month, Gov. Bob Riley created a task force to develop a plan for establishing online voting for Alabama residents living outside the state. Alabama Secretary of State Beth Chapman is chairing the task force.

The Legislature is reviewing bills that put a plan into law, although similar bills have failed in previous sessions, Chapman said.

Riley's task force stole some of the forum's thunder, but Chapman and her staff scheduled the forum before the task force was created.

Speakers from the Pentagon, the Department of Justice and the Overseas Vote Foundation attended the forum. A representative from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission was scheduled to attend, but was called to testify before Congress.

Sumrall brought 12 pages of notes to the forum, but boiled it down to a few highlights.

Time is a major factor, he said, since mail is delivered by the U.S. Postal Service to major military installations overseas, but then has to be carried by military personnel to more remote locations. Those trips often are hindered by security threats, Sumrall said.

There are about 66,000 Guardsmen in the Middle East now, including several Alabama units, he said. Military personnel are paid electronically and manage most of their important documents online, so the capability for secure online voting exists, he said.

"Frankly, soldiers know how to get to computers," Sumrall said.

Unexpected deployments also can prevent service members from voting, Maj. Gen. John White said. He's commander of the Alabama Air National Guard.

Another problem is that military members are prone to multiple moves, sometimes several in short periods of time.

In the 2006 general election, more than 70 percent of the ballots returned to local election offices were undeliverable, according to information from Caroline Hunter, vice chair of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. Hunter was scheduled to speak at the forum, but was called to testify before Congress, so Chapman presented the information in her place.

Chapman said one option she's exploring is to create a system in which military transfers would trigger a change of address notice to election officials, which would cut down on undeliverable absentee ballots. The forum was designed as an information gathering event, Chapman said. No decisions have been made as to how Alabama will institute online voting if the Legislature approves the option.

Riley's task force is operating on a timeline that would have online voting up in time for the 2010 election cycle, Chapman said, although any online voting system is subject to legislative approval.



# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

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## News Articles

### State looks at online voting systems

By Jenn Rowell

Online voting is inevitable, Alabama's Secretary of State Beth Chapman says.

Given that fact, she poses a question.

"Are we going to be on the front end of that or the back end of it?"

On Thursday, Chapman hosted the third meeting of the recently created task force on military and overseas voting. Chapman chairs the group founded by Gov. Bob Riley at her request.

At the meeting, three vendors briefed task force members, military members, state officials and residents on the capabilities of their systems. Currently, they are the only companies facilitating state and national elections worldwide. It was the first time they had assembled in one place, Chapman said.

She wants to have online voting available for military members and residents overseas in time for the 2010 election cycle.

The task force will review the three companies — EveryoneCounts, Election Systems & Software Inc. and Scytl: Secure Electronic Voting — and present the pros and cons of each to the Legislature.

Armed with options from the three companies, detailed information and answers to lawmakers' questions, Chapman said she hopes she and the task force will be able to sell lawmakers on the idea in the next session. House Majority Leader Rep. Ken Guin, D-Carbon Hill, said he is skeptical that a secure system can be developed. Guin is a former member of the Alabama Help America Vote Act Committee.

"I'm concerned about the paper trail," Guin said, adding that the Help America Vote Act requires a paper trail that can be traced if vote totals are challenged.

Currently, residents overseas request absentee ballots by mail, the ballots are mailed back and then the completed ballots are mailed again.

That mailing time hinders overseas voting considerably, Chapman said, since it takes about six to eight weeks for mail to get to troops, even longer to reach those in remote locations.

"It's our civic duty to protect the right to vote," she said.

In the River Region, there are about 50,000 military members, retirees and civilian defense employees. Some are here, but some are deployed.

The Department of Defense also is working to make it easier for military members to vote absentee, especially when they are deployed overseas. Several Web sites and foundations have been established that compile voting information from each state and put it in one place to make it more accessible to absentee voters.

Simplified voting processes or online voting likely would increase participation, Chapman said.

In one election, participation jumped 70 percent when online voting was an option, she said. She didn't specify which country or which company saw those numbers, since the fact-finding mission she's on could lead to a contract with one of the companies in the future.

Increased voting among troops could affect elections significantly since the military is already a highly active voting bloc.

In 2004, the voting participation rate among service members was 79 percent, compared with 64 percent of the general public, according to figures from the Federal Voting Assistance Program.

"Our heart's in the right place, our head's in the right place and now we've got more information about what's out there," Chapman said.

**Montgomery Advertiser**  
*June 20, 2008*



# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

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## News Articles

### Task Force eyeing Florida voting model

By Jenn Rowell

Military members and residents overseas need a better way to cast their ballots, the state's top elections official said.

And now Secretary of State Beth Chapman has a successful model to follow.

On Monday, Chapman and members of her task force on military and overseas voting heard a presentation by Pat Hollarn, supervisor of elections for Okaloosa County in Florida, on the Internet voting pilot program she ran this year.

The program put secure voting kiosks in three overseas locations — England, Germany and Japan — during the general election.

Chapman said she anticipates a bill will be introduced during Alabama's next legislative session. Similar legislation did not pass during the last session.

"It's just getting all officials on board to agree on how to do this," she said.

The kiosks in the pilot program used secure laptops and operated for a 10-day period. Since it was a pilot program, voting officials from Okaloosa County accompanied the kiosks to verify voters' identity and eligibility. Ballots were encrypted and transmitted to a secure server. The Okaloosa Canvassing Board validated, decrypted and tabulated the ballots.

Hollarn said the U.S. is "woefully behind" in the realm of electronic voting.

"We're still doing absentee voting the way we did in the Civil War," said Paul Lux, Hollarn's assistant. Maj. Gen. A.C. Blalock, adjutant general of the Alabama National Guard, attended the presentation with the Guard's judge advocate general, Col. Brian Morgan.

"If we can make that process available to deployed soldiers and airmen, they will use it because then they'll know their vote will count," Blalock said of the Okaloosa pilot program. "The current process is a chain of ifs. You never really know if your vote counts."

Morgan added that the current system is entirely dependent on the mail, which is often slow to reach deployed locations. But, they typically have Internet access.

"We're working with the system we have," Morgan said. "But technology sure can help us." The military is already a highly active voting bloc.

In 2004, the voting participation rate among service members was 79 percent, compared with 64 percent for Task Force eyeing Florida voting model

the general public, according to figures from the Federal Voting Assistance Program.

"I hope we can find a way ... to be able to work with you in the state of Alabama to make this possible," Hollarn said. "You have no idea the ground swell military ... voters have for something like this."

**Montgomery Advertiser**

*Dec. 16, 2008*



# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

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## News Articles

### Study: Overseas voters don't have adequate time

By Jenn Rowell

Military members stationed overseas don't have adequate time to vote if they're sending their ballots to Alabama.

Such are the findings in a Pew Center on the States report released Tuesday, which states that in addition to Alabama, the District of Columbia and 16 other states, including Georgia and Tennessee, don't provide enough time for military members abroad to vote.

Pew researchers said about 800,000 voters could be affected by policy changes recommended in their report, which is part of Pew's Make Voting Work initiative.

The findings came as no surprise to Secretary of State Beth Chapman.

"They're reporting facts as we've known them for a long time," she said. "Alabama needs desperately to address this."

Alabama tops the list in terms of the time it takes to complete the voting process, as it can take some military voters 88 days from start to finish, the report found. Part of the reason is because Alabama is one of three states — New York and Wyoming are the other two — that require everything to be sent using the U.S. Postal Service.

"That's a huge obstacle that we've got to overcome," Chapman said.

The Pew study found that sending blank ballots sooner and allowing them to be transmitted electronically would significantly speed up the voting process in Alabama. Using the current process, the Pew study found that 23 more days are needed to ensure overseas voters have enough time to cast their ballots.

Other recommendations in the report include:

Expanded use of the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot for state and local elections. That ballot is a downloadable form that allows military and overseas voters to write in their choices for general elections for federal office and return it by the state's deadline. It's a backup tool used when military and overseas voters have requested a ballot, but have not received one;

And eliminating the requirement to have absentee ballots notarized, but the report found it wouldn't have much affect on the speed of Alabama's absentee process.

Electronic voting is an avenue Alabama is considering, under Chapman's guidance. In December, the task force on overseas voting, which Chapman oversees, was briefed on a pilot program in Okaloosa County in Florida.

The program put secure voting kiosks in three overseas locations — England, Germany and Japan — during the general election.

The kiosks in the pilot program used secure laptops and operated for a 10-day period. Since it was a pilot program, voting officials from Okaloosa County accompanied the kiosks to verify voters' identity and eligibility. Ballots were encrypted and transmitted to a secure server. The Okaloosa Canvassing Board validated, decrypted and tabulated the ballots.

It's a model Chapman is hoping to implement in Alabama.

Chapman's office is finishing the task force report that will be presented to key state lawmakers and is also combining two bills from last year, with adjustments, into new legislation for the next session.

"We've learned some lessons," she said.

Sen. Wendell Mitchell, D-Luverne, said online voting strikes him as the future and he likely would support it in Alabama.

Regarding Chapman's push for the online pilot program, Mitchell said, "I'm eager to see that it has safeguards and make sure it's not subject to fraud."

Chapman said she wants to incorporate laws that would allow them to pilot a program similar to Florida's. "I just believe it's something that is sitting there waiting," she said. "We don't have to reinvent the wheel. It's like Microsoft Word, it's in a box."

Thirty-one states provide enough time, but 19 of them allow for completed ballots to be returned electronically, which has raised security concerns.

David Becker, the project director of Make Voting Work for Pew, noted that sending blank ballots electronically don't pose much risk, according to a report from the National Institute of Standards and Technology. But, returning them electronically, the report found, needs further study.

**Montgomery Advertiser**  
*Jan. 7, 2009*





# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

## News Articles

### 1885 State wants online voting for military

MONTGOMERY (AP) — Alabama Secretary of State Beth Chapman said Thursday that she would like to have a system in place by the 2010 governor's election to allow overseas military personnel to vote online.

If the Legislature agrees to allow Internet voting, Alabama would be the first state in the country to allow full-scale voting on the Internet by military personnel. But one key legislator says he is skeptical that a system can be devised to keep ballots secure.

#### Trial run

Adam Thompson, Help America Vote Act coordinator for the secretary of state's office, said Okaloosa County, Fla., plans a trial run in November to allow some overseas soldiers to vote by Internet.

But Chapman hopes Alabama will be the first to go statewide. In 2006, Alabama was sued by the U.S. Justice Department be-

cause there was not enough time between party primaries and runoffs to allow military personnel overseas to vote.

As a result, runoff elections in 2006 and this year were moved to six weeks after the primaries.

On Thursday Chapman invited representatives of three companies to the state Capitol to demonstrate systems being used in other countries that allow Internet voting. Voter registrars and other members of an advisory panel viewed the demonstrations.

The Legislature would have to approve Internet voting. Currently military personnel and other citizens must request an absentee voting application, then apply for a ballot, which is mailed to them. They then mail the ballot to their county, a process that often takes weeks, particularly for troops in remote combat locations, like those in Iraq and Afghanistan.

## The Decatur Daily

June 20, 2008



# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

## News Articles

### Security top issue for military voting

#### ■ Troops overseas would be able to vote online

*The Associated Press*

MONTGOMERY — Alabama Secretary of State Beth Chapman said Thursday that she would like to have a system in place by the 2010 governor's election to allow overseas military personnel to vote online.

If the Legislature agrees to allow Internet voting, Alabama would be the first state in the country to allow full-scale voting on the Internet by military personnel. But one key legislator

says he is skeptical that a system can be devised to keep ballots secure.

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The Legislature would have to approve Internet voting. Currently military personnel and other citizens must request an absentee voting application, then apply for a ballot, which is mailed to them. They then mail the ballot to their county, a process that often takes weeks, particularly for troops

in remote combat locations, like those in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"I feel confident we'll have something to take to the Legislature to allow use of Internet voting," Chapman said.

But House Majority Leader Rep. Ken Guin, D-Carbon Hill, said he is skeptical that a secure system can be developed. Guin is a former member of the Alabama Help America Vote Act Committee.

"I'm concerned about the paper trail," Guin said. He said the Help America Vote Act requires a paper trail that can be traced if vote totals are challenged.

**The Selma Times Journal**

*June 21, 2008*





# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

## News Articles

### AU online voting venture worth looking into for state

The time is now for Alabama to take special measures in fighting voter fraud.

That's why it's especially noteworthy that Auburn University has teamed with San Diego firm Everyone Counts to create a better means to hold online elections for those who cannot make it to their respective polling places.

As reported in Thursday's edition of the Opelika-Auburn News, Auburn Associate Professor Dr. Juan Gilbert has teamed with computer science and software engineering students to develop new technology that will allow anyone to

#### OUR VIEW

vote, regardless of ability or location. Everyone Counts has worked toward the same goal.

One of the most important aspects of voting is accuracy.

In the past, it's been difficult for some to trust voting systems, particularly the ones that collect absentee votes. That's why it's so important and interesting to see one that could gain public trust be

#### It is time for voting methods in Alabama

#### to embrace new technology.

developed right here.

Just last week, we saw Alabama Attorney General Troy King seize voting records in Perry, Bullock and Lowndes counties to investigate potential problems during the June 3 primaries.

Wednesday, Alabama Secretary of

State Beth Chapman formed a special unit specially designed to handle voter fraud.

Voting for the leadership that will shape our state and nation is one of the greatest freedoms we enjoy and gives taxpaying citizens a sense of ownership in their government.

We cannot afford to have false elections.

It is time for voting methods in Alabama to embrace new technology and move into the 21st century.

We look forward to seeing if this partnership bears fruit in Montgomery.

The Opelika-Auburn News  
June 20, 2008



# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

## News Articles

### Lawmakers like Web votes for overseas troops

1885  
The Associated Press

#### OVERSEAS VOTING

MONTGOMERY | A bill to allow Alabama residents living overseas to vote over a secure Internet connection has the support of a majority of the members of the Alabama Legislature, but some say they are concerned the system might be susceptible to voter fraud.

The bill was endorsed last week by a bipartisan task force appointed by Gov. Bob Riley to study the issue of military voting. The measure is being introduced in the Legislature by state Rep. Jimmy Martin, D-Clanton.

Military personnel and other Alabama voters living overseas now must request ballots from their counties, wait for the ballots to be mailed to them, and then return their votes to the county. The whole process must be done by U.S. mail and the ballot must be witnessed.

A recent study by the Pew Center on the States listed Alabama among 25 states that need to improve the voting process for overseas voters. The report said the entire process of casting a ballot can take as long as 88 days for a military voter from Alabama, the slowest time among all states.

Martin's bill would allow overseas voters to receive

	Senate	House
Support	63%	70%
Oppose	17%	7%
Undecided	20%	23%

Source: Associated Press survey; 70 percent of House members and 94 percent of senators responded

their ballots in several different ways, including by fax, the Internet, e-mail and private delivery services like UPS and Fed Ex. The voter could also return his or her ballot through a secure Internet hookup or by fax or private delivery service. Voters would not be able to use e-mail to return ballots.

A similar bill died in the Legislature last year, but Secretary of State Beth Chapman said Friday she is encouraged by the support the measure is receiving as the 2009 session is about to begin. She said she hopes some form of Internet voting is available to overseas voters before the 2010 elections, when Alabama residents will elect a governor and other constitutional officers.

"I would love to have it by 2010," Chapman said. "It's in the hands of the Legislature. I hope they will allow Alabama to give back to those in the military who have given so much to us."

The Tuscaloosa News

Feb. 1, 2009



# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

## News Articles

### THE LEGISLATURE

# Overseas Web voting bill backed

By **BOB JOHNSON**  
*The Associated Press*

MONTGOMERY — A bill to allow Alabama residents living overseas to vote over a secure Internet connection has the support of a majority of the members of the Alabama Legislature, but some say they are concerned the system might be susceptible to voter fraud.

In an Associated Press survey of legislators, 63 percent of senators responding said they support the bill that's being pushed by Secretary of State Beth Chapman, while 17 percent said they oppose it and 20 percent are undecided.

In the House, 70 percent of representatives responding said they favor allowing overseas voters, including military personnel in combat areas like Iraq and Afghanistan, to request ballots and cast their votes over the Internet. Seven percent said they oppose the bill, while 23 percent were undecided.

Responding to the survey

### HOW IT WOULD WORK

- ▶ Overseas voters could receive their ballots in several different ways, including by fax, the Internet, e-mail and private delivery services like UPS and Fed Ex.
- ▶ Voters could return ballots through a secure Internet hookup or by fax or private delivery service.

were 70 percent of House members and 94 percent of senators. The Legislature opens its regular session Tuesday.

The bill was endorsed earlier this week by a bipartisan task force appointed by Gov. Bob Riley to study the issue of military voting. The measure is being introduced in the Legislature by state Rep. Jimmy Martin, D-Clanton.

Currently, military personnel and other Alabama voters living overseas must request

ballots from their counties, wait for the ballots to be mailed to them, and then return their votes to the county. The whole process must be done by U.S. mail and the ballot must be witnessed.

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Martin's bill would allow overseas voters to receive their ballots in several different ways, including by fax, the Internet, e-mail and private delivery services like UPS and Fed Ex. The voter could also return his or her ballot through a secure Internet hookup or by fax or private delivery service.

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Chapman said Friday she is encouraged by the support the measure is receiving as the 2009 session is about to begin. She said she hopes some form of Internet voting is available to overseas voters before the 2010 elections, when Alabama residents will elect a governor and other constitutional officers.

"I would love to have it by 2010," Chapman said. Chapman hopes to establish a system similar to one tested in the 2008 election by military personnel from Oskaloosa County, Fla., in Japan, Germany and England.

Only a small percentage of Alabama voters living overseas managed to cast absentee ballots in the 2008 presidential election. A total of 5,743 Alabama citizens overseas voted by absentee ballot, including military members serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, among other places, according to a report released by Chapman's office.

**The Birmingham News**  
Jan. 31, 2009





# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

## News Articles

### Chapman advocates electronic military voting, photo I.D.

Secretary of State Beth Chapman has been a long-time advocate of military voting rights and Photo Voter I.D. Chapman will be instrumental in offering legislation as a solution to both issues in the upcoming legislative session.

Chapman and her staff have created legislation which utilizes the success the State of Florida recently experienced in a nationally-renowned electronic military voting pilot program. The Military and Overseas Voting Task Force, which Chapman chairs, will meet on Thursday of this week to discuss and finalize that legislation. The legislation that the Secretary of State and her staff propose also combined successful legislation of both the State of Georgia and Indiana which have already passed Photo Voter I.D. laws.

In a recent Associated Press article, the point was made that members of the Alabama State Legislature believe Photo Voter I.D. would deter some citizens from voting. Chapman's bill would solve that problem in that photo identification cards would be provided free of charge to anyone who does not already possess a valid form of photo identification.

"In the world we live in, everyone needs a photo I.D. for reasons of safety and security," Chapman said. "There is no doubt that laws to require photo I.D. at the polls would assist us in our

ongoing efforts to stop any possibility of voter fraud and to protect the integrity of the elections process."

Chapman continues to be a leading national advocate for electronic military voting and chairs the Military and Overseas Voting Task Force which is preparing to present

such legislation after months of meetings, presentations and studies. "We must ensure that men and women of the United States Military who are fighting for our right to vote are given theirs," Chapman said. "Anything short of that would be un-American."

**The Sumter Co. Record-Journal**  
*Jan. 29, 2009*



# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

## News Articles

### Alabama sees voting problems overseas

By Brian Reynolds  
Staff Writer

Of the 43 overseas voting applications Tuscaloosa County Circuit Clerk Magaria Bobo received for the November 2008 election, 25 were returned in time to be counted.

Twelve to 15 others were received after the deadline had passed, highlighting a problem with overseas voting in several states, including Alabama.

A Pew Center study released Tuesday said that 16 states do not allow enough time for residents overseas, including those in the military, to cast ballots in elections.

A large part of the problem comes

from slow mail systems that must be used to deliver and return ballots, the study showed. Alabama also requires that ballots must be witnessed or notarized, which can cause further delays.

Bobo agreed that the slow mail system can delay a ballot.

"The day I got the application in is the day I send it out," Bobo said. "It just takes so long to get there. I'm doing my part, and I'm sure that they're sending them back as soon as they vote."

Alabama Secretary of State Beth Chapman said that much of the problem lies with the U.S. Postal Service.

Chapman said a state law that requires ballots be sent to military

personnel and returned by U.S. Mail delays the process. Delivering mail to troops overseas can take 15 days, with another 15 days to get ballots back.

Chapman said Alabama voting officials are not even allowed to send ballots by parcel services such as UPS or FedEx. Chapman has proposed legislation that would allow overseas voters to cast ballots over a secure Internet connection.

"It's no surprise that Alabama is way behind on this. We've got to improve," Chapman said.

She said the system is so slow said she believes many Alabama residents living overseas no longer vote because of the hassle involved.

**The Tuscaloosa News**

*Jan. 8, 2009*



# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

## News Articles

### Editorials

## State denies soldiers full voting rights

**A** NEW study explains why so few Alabama soldiers serving overseas voted in the 2008 presidential election.

According to the Pew Center on the States, Alabama's laws and regulations make it virtually impossible for soldiers manning the front lines of freedom abroad to have their votes counted back home.

The Pew Center studied state requirements for overseas voting and carefully estimated the time it takes members of the military to cast ballots under those varying rules. Alabama had the nation's most cumbersome, time-consuming election process for soldiers stationed overseas. Pew researchers estimated Alabama soldiers needed 88 days to obtain ballots by mail, fill them out and have them notarized, and then return them via snail mail.

Mississippi shows far more respect for the voting rights of soldiers. The Magnolia State allows soldiers to register, request ballots and vote by e-mail or fax.

Alabama doesn't permit the use of modern technology to facilitate voting by soldiers based in faraway countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Japan.

Mississippi provides a minimum 45-day transit time for overseas ballots. Alabama doesn't.

Alabama is one of just eight states that require soldiers and others living abroad to have their ballots witnessed or notarized. The Pew report says this rule adds several days to the voting process.

Beth Chapman, Alabama's secretary of state, concedes the state's laborious process for overseas voting has effectively disfranchised thousands of Alabamians. Many state residents living in other countries "just gave up a long time ago and quit trying to vote," she said.

In the historic Nov. 4 election, a minuscule 6 percent of the

state's overseas residents voted.

It's not clear why the state has chosen to discourage overseas voting. Perhaps some legislators see a partisan advantage in disfranchising a group of military voters. Or maybe it's simple indifference to a group that has little political influence in Montgomery.

Regardless of the causes of the discrimination, the Legislature has a moral obligation to end it.

Secretary of State Chapman and Gov. Bob Riley favor allowing overseas voters to cast ballots through a secure Internet connection. The Pew report notes that questions persist about the security of electronic voting. But considering that millions of Americans make credit card purchases over the Internet with few problems, it ought to be possible for state government to maintain a secure system for Internet voting.

If legislators can't shake their fear of online balloting, they can make other changes that would significantly speed up the voting process for those living abroad. The Pew report recommends dropping the notary requirement and allowing electronic transmission of ballots and other election materials (instead of relying on regular mail).

Only three states totally prohibit sending election materials by fax or e-mail. There's no legitimate reason for Alabama lawmakers to resist making this transition into the modern world of communications.

Most Alabamians proudly view the state as a bastion of patriotism and pro-military sentiment. Residents should feel anger and shame over their government's failure to secure the voting rights of soldiers overseas. This disgraceful situation is likely to continue until Alabamians demand that their lawmakers bring soldiers and others living abroad into the democratic process.

**The Mobile Press-Register**  
*Jan. 11, 2009*





# Military & Overseas Voting Task Force

## News Articles

### Lawmakers like Web votes for troops

1885  
By Bob Johnson  
The Associated Press

A bill to allow Alabama residents living overseas to vote over a secure Internet connection has the support of a majority of the members of the Alabama Legislature, but some say they are concerned the system might be susceptible to voter fraud.

In an Associated Press survey of legislators, 63 percent of senators responding said they support the bill that's being pushed by Secretary of State Beth Chapman, while 17 percent said they oppose it and 20 percent are undecided.

In the House, 70 percent of representatives responding said they favor allowing overseas voters, including military personnel in combat areas like Iraq and Afghanistan, to request ballots and cast their votes over the Internet. Seven



percent said they oppose the bill, while 23 percent were undecided.

Responding to the survey were 70 percent of House members and 94 percent of senators. The Legislature opens its regular session Tuesday.

The bill was endorsed earlier this week by a bipartisan task force appointed by Gov. Bob Riley to study the issue of military voting. The measure is being introduced in the Legislature by state Rep. Jimmy Martin, D-Clanton.

Currently, military personnel and other Alabama voters

living overseas must request ballots from their counties, wait for the ballots to be mailed to them, and then return their votes to the county. The whole process must be done by U.S. mail and the ballot must be witnessed.

A recent study by the Pew Center on the States listed Alabama among 25 states that need to improve the voting process for overseas voters. The report said the entire process of casting a ballot can take as long as 88 days for a military voter from Alabama, the slowest time among all states.

Martin's bill would allow overseas voters to receive their ballots by fax, the Internet, e-mail and private delivery services like UPS and Fed Ex. The voter could also return his or her ballot through a secure Internet hookup or by fax or private delivery service. Voters would not be able to use e-mail to return ballots.

Only a small percentage of Alabama voters living overseas managed to cast absentee ballots in the 2008 presidential election. A total of 5,743 Alabama citizens overseas voted by absentee ballot, including military members serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, among other places, according to a report released by Chapman's office. The overseas voters accounted for less than one-half of 1 percent of the votes cast in Alabama.

Some legislators said they are concerned it would be difficult to keep ballots secure and secret if cast over the Internet.

"We want the bill to have protections in it so the system cannot be abused," said state Rep. Alvin Holmes, D-Montgomery. "It seems like the system would be subject to abuse by others who are not eligible to vote."

## Montgomery Advertiser

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## The Birmingham News

Aug. 26, 2008

1885  
MONTGOMERY  
Electronic voting for some overseas?

The Alabama Circuit Clerks Association wants the Legislature to approve a secure electronic voting system for military personnel and other Alabamians who are overseas. The clerks handle absentee ballots, and members of their association unanimously endorsed the plan at a recent conference. Cullman County Circuit Clerk Robert Bates says he mailed 153 ballots to military and other Alabamians overseas during the 2004 general election, but 66 were not returned for unknown reasons. Bates says counties

statewide experienced a similar drop-off in returned ballots, and that's why a more efficient system of voting is needed.





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## News Articles

### A poll tax on soldiers?

**A**LABAMA'S RESTRICTIVE rules on voting by soldiers stationed overseas are at odds with the state's reputation as a bastion of patriotism and support for the military.

Under the state's rules, soldiers stationed overseas must request an absentee ballot in writing and then return it by mail. This makes it unnecessarily difficult for soldiers serving the country abroad to participate in democracy at home.

National surveys have found that voter participation rates for members of the military stationed overseas are low compared to the general population. The participation rate for Alabama soldiers may be especially low, given that other states do more

to guarantee soldiers' voting rights.

The Legislature has repeatedly failed to act on proposals that would allow absentee voting on secure Internet sites and permit election officials to fax absentee ballots.

Concerns about voter fraud are legitimate, but as Gov. Riley has pointed out, current technology makes it possible to have secure voting in remote locations.

Secretary of State Beth Chapman doesn't think lawmakers' obstinacy on this issue is malicious. Maybe not. But the longer the Legislature leaves these obstacles in place, the more they remind us of the poll tax and other measures that once were used to discourage voting by blacks.

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